



PLACER COUNTY  
**SHERIFF**  
CORONER-MARSHAL



MAIN OFFICE  
P.O. BOX 6990  
AUBURN, CA 95604  
PH: (530)889-7800 FAX: (530)889-7899

TAHOE SUBSTATION  
DRAWER 1710  
TAHOE CITY, CA 96145  
PH: (530)581-6300 FAX: (530)581-6377

**EDWARD N. BONNER**  
SHERIFF-CORONER-MARSHAL

**STEPHEN L. D'ARCY**  
UNDERSHERIFF

## PRESS RELEASE

Date/Time of Release: Wednesday, March 21, 2007 4 p.m.  
Date/Time of Occurrence: Wednesday, March 21, 2007  
Nature of Event: Guilty Plea in Federal/Placer County ATM Skimming Case  
Location of Call: Sacramento  
Released by: Dena Erwin, PIO (530) 889-6922

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### **SHERIFF EDWARD N. BONNER RELEASES THE FOLLOWING:**

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The man caught by Placer County Sheriff's detectives in a large-scale ATM card-skimming case pleaded guilty in Federal Court today.

United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that Claudiu Hotea, 34, of Orange County, pleaded guilty to credit card fraud before U.S. District Judge Morrison C. England, Jr.

Detective Jim Hudson arrested Hotea on January 26, 2006, at the Thunder Valley Casino in Lincoln as Hotea used different cards to make multiple, back-to-back withdrawals from an ATM. Prior to the arrest, Hudson led an intensive investigation that determined Hotea had skimmed ATM card data from customers who had used their cards at local Arco/AM-PM stations. Hotea then re-encoded gift cards to function as ATM cards.

"The success of this case is due to the cooperation of a wide variety of agencies all working together," said Sheriff Ed Bonner. "That includes Thunder Valley security, bank investigators, Arco corporate security, Sheriff's investigators, the U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Attorney McGregor Scott."

The total attempted ATM withdrawals amounted to \$576,650 and the total successful withdrawals \$185,896.

Hotea is scheduled for sentencing June 14, 2007, in U.S. District Court in Sacramento.